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REGENTS FOCUSES ON PERFORMANCE FUNDING

Baton Rouge: Today the Louisiana Board of Regents discussed the distribution of over \$80 million in new state funds for Louisiana's public colleges and universities including funds designed to drive improved performance and spur economic growth.

"We are pleased with the sustained efforts that Governor Foster and the legislature have made to postsecondary education again this year. As a result of their actions, our institutions will have an opportunity to advance many reform initiatives now underway across our state," said Commissioner of Higher Education Joe Savoie.

A Performance and Quality Improvement Pool of almost \$15 million in recurring and one-time funds will drive the implementation of the Master Plan for Public Postsecondary Education, the state's strategic plan for all institutions. This plan includes a focus on student preparation, retention, graduation, teacher education reform and economic development efforts.

Commissioner Savoie says the state's system boards will play a significant role in the awarding of these funds. "We have asked that systems work with their individual institutions in developing investment priorities. This will allow system board members to be directly involved in setting priorities that will drive improvements on all campuses." Plans will be sent to the Regents for review and approval.

In addition, the state has provided more than \$12 million in funding for biotechnology initiatives most of which will be awarded to campuses on a competitive peer-reviewed basis in targeted areas with economic development potential.

The Regents also discussed the awarding of \$2 million to advance teacher education reform with priorities for funding to be established by the systems and campuses. These funds will require institutional matching funds, which the Commissioner of Higher Education believes to be an

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important driver for change. “This provision will allow us to double the impact of the funds, change institutional behavior and establish institutional priorities.”

In addition, the state has appropriated \$7.6 million to be distributed to community and technical colleges to support enrollment growth and funding needs in this critical area of development.

According to Savoie, the entire approach to allocating funds is to support and advance the state’s priorities. “These funds will allow us to take the next steps in the evolution of our system. For the first few years we focused on rebuilding, now we’re targeting performance and quality improvements. New resources and results must go hand in hand.”

Final funding distribution plans will be presented to the Board of Regents at its August meeting.

The Board was also presented a summary of the capital outlay budget provided to postsecondary education by the Governor and Legislature for fiscal year 2002-2003, which includes almost \$51 million in general fund cash for projects and initiatives.